

# Appendix

## ESSA Listening Tours Summary Notes

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**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Boone/Winnebago Regional Office of Education 4/April 18, 2016**  
**Host: Assistant ROE Superintendent Linda Oshita**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:30–5:40 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Cora Goldston**

Participants: 37 (staff of Illinois legislators, superintendents, assistant superintendents, regional assistant superintendents, Title I directors, principals, and district administrators)

**Speaker 1**

- Looking for meaningful assessments that incorporate growth models. The PARCC does not include growth measures.

**Speaker 2**

- Seeking clarification and guidance around using the SAT or ACT next year—there’s some conversation that those test could be options for assessing high school students.
- We currently use the ACT, and switching tests is an involved process.

**Speaker 3**

- Please keep Rising Star so we continue to have a consistent base for continuous improvement plans.

**Speaker 4**

- Want to ensure that districts retain local control.
- My district is looking at the Austin Growth Model to continually assess student progress.

**Speaker 5**

- There’s frustration throughout the state because professional development offerings don’t always align to national initiatives.
- Working on a national program where we embed a 2-year professional development program in schools, which incorporates national and state initiatives.
- We’re aiming to align with teacher leadership objectives and develop programming that creates teacher leadership endorsements.

**Speaker 6**

- Timeliness of communication from ISBE is important.
- Districts have learned the hard way that it doesn’t pay to get out ahead of new regulations.
- Illinois has a new contract with SAT, but it won’t be effective until a new budget is passed. In the meantime, the districts have to plan on their own assessment strategies.

### **Speaker 7**

- Question: For the districts, what should keep moving and what should we put on hold (e.g., Title I plans, assessments, accountability measures)?

### **Speaker 8**

- Question: Are districts required to participate in Rising Star next year?

### **Speaker 9**

- There are silos within the ISBE and among districts. One silo is separating special education from other educational programs. Special education is education; it shouldn't be completely separated.
- There needs to be more organization for a statewide system of delivery.
- In some wealthier districts, there have been discussions about not taking federal or state funding to avoid mandates.

### **Speaker 10**

- We are getting e-mails from many different groups within ISBE. We need to have consistency to know that we're getting trustworthy information.
- Would also like to see a system that alerts us when there are updates to ISBE's website, like an RSS feed.

### **Speaker 11**

- Question: Is there any information on how this will affect Perkins funding for career and technical education?

### **Speaker 12**

- Practitioners are talking about comparing your district's results versus your own past performance, not other districts, when looking at growth measures.
- It's difficult to compare districts. One district's performance might never look like another district's performance.

### **Speaker 13**

- We're talking a lot about growth models and assessments—they are tied together. The assessments have to be aligned with growth models.
- If we're going to use a norm reference test and growth model in the same breath, we have a big problem—you could have worse scores because the norms are shifted.
- My hope when we were talking about PARCC was to have two assessments during the year and measuring growth with a pre/post model.

**Speaker 14**

- There needs to be more local control.
- Question: Do you see where districts will have more say locally in how they choose their own testing systems? Or how they can use growth or graduation measures?
- Question: Will the Illinois state plan be a living, breathing document?

**Speaker 15**

- The state should consider when to release requests for proposals (RFPs), so schools and districts can implement programs at the beginning of the school year. Having an RFP in the fall means you can't start programming until January or February.
- Sustainability is an issue—to make an impact, you need to keep funding going for a few years. Think about applying for funding at previously funded sites.

**Speaker 16**

- Keep the Regional Offices of Education in mind when drafting the state plan.

**Speaker 17**

- Question: As NCLB was being implemented, there were opportunities for people to provide input and ask questions. Are there plans for ISBE to answer questions or get input during ESSA implementation?

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Belleville Regional Office of Education 50/April 18, 2016**  
**Host: ROE Superintendent Susan Safarty**  
**Presenter: Jason Helfer**  
**4:35–5:45 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Rachel Trimble**

Participants: 48 (superintendents, assistant participants, coordinators, union, PTA, teachers, and parents)

**Gabe Schwemmer**, Illinois Association of School Boards (read a written testimony)

- Testing/assessment needs to be more than one time a year—multiple measures—reflect best practices.
- District practice—Professional practice (teacher evaluation) continue to keep the high 70 percent and research-based practices of local data and evidence of district improvement.
  - More about student performance and less about compliance.

**Kelly Renijohn**, teacher, O’Fallon High School, for 20 years

- Remember the importance of teachers and get them involved and part of the process. Use teacher leaders to help with the agency planning.
- PD needs to look at teacher and leaders and the STEM leaders within our districts. Look into the business world and use this resource as a part of the process.
- Look at hybrid positions so teachers can take on other roles in schools.

**Lynn Gaddis**, Illinois State Teachers of the Year and Finalists (provided a hard copy of her detailed comments)

- Use the teachers as they know their students and teacher leaders. Many teacher leaders, coaches and mentors statewide. This is time to start to redesign our statewide system—teacher voice needs to be included.
- Ideas to focus on:
  - Lead voice at state level—all teachers to serve on ISBE board and service on committees to allow for teacher feedback.
  - Teacher leaders on ESSA committees and title program committees.
  - PD—work with stakeholders to develop beyond SIP/DIP days—giving opportunities for learning—lead by teachers.
  - Funds for induction and mentoring programs for teachers.
  - Establish guidelines for teacher leaders providing PD.
  - Opportunities for PD and release time with compensation—to develop peer teaching, co-teaching.
  - Changing the culture for teacher leaders.

- Recommendations
  - Leadership Institutes—teams to gather and learn.
  - Teacher Leader training—all we have now is a teacher leader endorsement program.
  - Partner with other entities to align the training.
  - Offer school leader training.
- Don't settle—it's too important, all we have done is create systems under NCLB—let's think of a new way that captures of the teacher voice.

**Gloria Hicks**, East St. Louis parent

- Works hard to be heard.
- Would like to see all schools in East St. Louis work more with parents.
- Glad to see parents reflected in the ESSA act.
- Excited about the new opportunity feedback.
- Parents want to be a part of the processes.
- Parents need to be involved and there should be more opportunities for open door policies.

**Kelton Davis**, regional superintendent

- Is Illinois planning on applying for the grants on the timeline (referencing PowerPoint timeline)?

**Susan Sarfaty**, regional superintendent

- As you write your state plan—continue to think about the state's diversity—from small to large districts—bottom 5 percent, encourage the state to recognize and be flexible.
- Lowest 5 percent—look for ways to coordinate all of the services for this group and work to be cohesive as they are bombarded with many things.

**Martha Weld**, O'Fallon High School

- Increase opportunity for students and districts for flexibility to not cookie cutter/not so much one size fits all—more autonomy—too much as a district to do. Examples include Rising Star and 5 Essentials.
- Be able to use Title I dollars as we see fit, too many restrictions, too numerous, and we need more latitude to have more impact. We know what needs to be done and we need to allow districts to make good decisions.
- “Grade 13” to help students access the world of careers—needs to be a will for innovation and consider STEM and autonomy to create programs that can be vetted and approved from ages 17 and beyond.

**Jennifer Brumback**, assessment specialist, East St. Louis

- Want flexibility to use resources such as Advanced Accreditation. Having a system like AdvancED is beneficial.

**Devon Horton**, assistant superintendent, East St. Louis

- East St. Louis has unique circumstances with teachers in the district. Noticed ESSA allows ways to recruit teachers and programs that can benefit their district and others like them. Programs to help teachers hit the ground running.
- CPS has a teacher residency program that ESL observed; good for the state to consider.

**Michael Day**, O’Fallon High School

- With ISBE timeline, ask to wait until all rules and regulations, guidance come from feds—generating more paperwork is demoralizing as the state continues to frustrate teachers with paper load and requirements. Would like some consideration for more flexibility of teacher evaluation. Allow the district to work with their demographics to make the accountability more effective. Would like for ISBE to reconsider the accountability issues.

**Rhonda Jenkins**, Illinois PTA

- 90,000 parents represented.
- Growth-based model has been mentioned and supported by PTA as required by the feds. This came to the delegates in 2007.
- As of 2009, ISBE had standards that incorporate social-emotional learning—they feel this is beneficial.
- This is all coming from the parents.

**Carla Bird**, For Title IV—21st Century Schools

- Carla—Bird Technology specialist testimony—needs to provide greater latitude.
- Technology flexibility to make student need purchases.

**Evan Krauss**

- Question on what types of accountability flexibility is wanted by all or lessened?
- He referred to slide 18 and wanted people in the audience to comment.
- Kelton Davis—we want to know what the target is—for grants and programs—we have reduced federal control and are we going to replace fed control with state control? Kelton suggested a backward design approach when looking at accountability. Like to see some measure on how we measure social-emotional learning.
- Gabe Schwemmer—less teachers into the profession—if we keep the 70 percent—makes for a difficult system.
- O’Fallon teacher—every school writes own goals (1-, 3-, 5-year goals), the plan must be included and aligned to the goals and assessments with their own pieces that work. Pieces needed to include social-emotional and climate surveys. That is what my plan would look like.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**South Cook Intermediate Service Center/April 19, 2016**  
**Host: ISC Executive Director Dr. Vanessa Kinder**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:35–5:45 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Cora Goldston**

Participants: 70 (superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, assistant principals, teachers, school board members, policy advocate)

**Speaker 1**

- Currently, staff are de-incentivized from pursuing certain funding because of the heightened requirements for paying into the Teachers Retirement System (TRS).

**Speaker 2**

- Can we use this funding to explore full-day kindergarten?
- The sooner ISBE can share information about grant opportunities, the better. This is especially true if districts will need to hire staff to support the grant.
- Would it behoove districts to pursue schoolwide Title I funding instead of direct title funding?

**Speaker 3**

- Right now, it's unclear how gifted students will be identified within the school population for funding.

**Speaker 4**

- Can you provide any information about opportunities for social and emotional learning?

**Speaker 5**

- Under ESSA, there's room for more autonomy and flexibility. Wherever the state can extend this flexibility to districts, as opposed to making statewide initiatives, this would be better. We would love to be able to transfer our funding within ESSA-funded programs. We may not need as many total dollars, but we need the flexibility to use the dollars we have.

**Speaker 6**

- Coordinating services is important to ensure that everyone gets what they need. Databasing tools and tagging could expand the reach of services.

**Lynn Gaddis**, president, Illinois State Teachers of the Year

- We need to focus on teacher voice, teacher leadership participation in developing all sections of the plan, communication developed specifically for teachers, and opportunity for feedback from teachers.
- ISBE should increase the number of teachers participating in the Center for Teaching Quality Collaborative to get continued input.
- Professional development should be teacher-led and teacher-designed.
- The roles of teacher leaders should be aligned to the needs of students at each schools. The teacher leader roles should be transparent, and they should be chosen thoughtfully.
- Teacher induction programs should be extended.
- There should be peer coaching and mentoring programs for both new and experienced teachers.
- We also need to have teacher leadership training with performance-based accountability, and partner with organizations that already have experience with teacher leadership training.

**Sharon Archie-Davenport**, school board member, CCSD 168 Sauk Village, and vice chair, Illinois Association of School Boards, South Cook Division

- In CCSD 168, we are looking at four big questions:
  - What do we want students to know?
  - How will we know if students have learned?
  - What will be our response when we realize that students have learned what we are trying to teach?
  - What will be our response when we realize that students haven't learned what we are trying to teach?
- Our district has added some structures to supplement assessments and answer our big questions. These supports include student learning and perception data, multi-tiered systems of support, reading specialists, professional learning communities, and a staff advisory group to discuss school policies.

**Speaker 9**

- Sometimes we're asked to implement policies that were made for general education, and they don't work for special education populations.
- When it comes to assessment, right now there are three categories of students: those taking the statewide assessment, those taking the alternate assessment, and the 1 percent that can opt out of testing.
- Can we find an assessment that will work for all students?

**Speaker 10**

- We need more emphasis on discipline and school safety. Students can't do well if they don't feel safe in their schools. We need more emphasis on training teachers and staff to encourage a good school climate.

**Speaker 11**

- Hesitation about accountability—worried that accountability is confused with ranking schools in some order.

**Speaker 12**

- We would love to have each district's progress measured against their own goals, NOT the progress or goals of other districts.

**Speaker 13**

- We need a streamlined process to collect data, because eventually, data collection can become a very burdensome process.

**Speaker 14**

- Want to see career and technical education included as part of a “well-rounded” education.

**Speaker 15**

- South Cook ISC wants to be involved in the state plan-drafting process.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**DuPage County Regional Office of Education 19/April 21, 2016**  
**Host: ROE Superintendent Dr. Darlene Ruscitti**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:30–5:50 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Cora Goldston**

Participants: 75 (superintendents, assistant superintendents, ROE consultants, teachers, Center for School Improvement staff, assessment directors, district administrators, curriculum directors, librarians)

**Dave Larson**, Glenbard High School District 87

- The problem for growth accountability measures is that math tests are subject-based. For high school students, that assessment covers Algebra I, so if students aren't in that course, they aren't being assessed.
- Could schools drop the PARCC test for high school and focus on the PSAT, as it leads to the SAT?

**Doug Domeracki**, superintendent, Community High School District 94

- Districts have seen reductions in administrative outreach grants and special education grants. Will there be any restoration of support for those grants, in addition to support for professional development, back to levels of about 4–5 years ago?
- Are we providing one Type I assessment at the high school level, or are we providing a set of options?
- District 94 is an early implementer of the TERA evaluation model. We could accomplish a lot if we crafted teacher evaluation to be more of a coaching model.

**Matt Rich**, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, Downers Grove Grade School District 58

- Elementary schools would also like to have a menu of assessment options. There are other several national assessments for elementary schools.

**Charlie Johns**, superintendent, West Chicago District 33

- We need to move towards a more meaningful assessment than PARCC.

**Mikkel Storaasli**, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, Leyden High School District 212

- An idea for optional innovative assessment is looking into the PACE program, which goes from elementary into high school.
- Some have used external organizations like AdvancED to do some capacity assessment.

**Patricia Steinmeyer**, teacher and parent

- There are a lot of provisions in ESSA that support high-ability students.
- Other assessments can raise the ceiling for performance and growth measurement above the ceiling that PARCC has set, allowing better measurement for high-achieving students.

**Eliot Regenstein**, Ounce of Prevention Fund

- Under NCLB, the focus was so heavily on assessment, which starts at third grade. This means that there really weren't accountability measures for K–2. Under ESSA, we have the opportunity to develop accountability measures for K–2 instruction.

**Mark Klaisner**, executive director, West Cook Intermediate Service Center

- The key component of the Illinois Balanced Accountability measure (IBAM) is that it allows districts to tell their own story. Currently, there are two components in the IBAM score: 30 percent was based on achievement, and 70 percent was based on measures of the school improvement process. Now with ESSA, there are some different rules about what those percentages can be, but districts can still tell their stories. And in the IBAM design, your district's performance is measured against your own capacity, not the performance or capacity or other districts. While redesigning for ESSA, the goal is not to lose any of the existing measures, but maybe one measure will be shifted to focus more on performance.

**Darlene Ruscitti**, superintendent, ROE 19

- We need to talk about where teacher leadership fits in. The leadership piece is so critical—it's important to have teacher leadership supports at both the school and district levels.

**Kathy Catalani**, IEA Grassroots Political Activists

- When looking at the state plan tentative timeline, we could organize it by topic rather than just a high-level overview. Different sections can be drafted and posted for comment earlier.

**Mary Spevacek**, teacher librarian, East Aurora School District 131

- The state used to provide some significant help for libraries. Now the school gets \$.68 for each student.
- The state also used to get database services, but now students don't have experience with databases.
- The biggest issue is staffing—someone needs to update the devices and library collections. When the staff goes, the library goes.

**Someone** from Community Consolidated School District 33

- Consider professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to support ELs.

**Kristina Davis**, assistant superintendent, West Chicago District 33

- We appreciate the support given to the Seal of Biliteracy. This is a good sign, but there's so much focus on English proficiency—there needs to be some assessment of the well-being of the whole child as well.

**Laura Hill**, director, School District U-46

- It's important to have a choice model in accountability plans.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Champaign/Ford Regional Office of Education 9/April 21, 2016**  
**Host: ROE Superintendent Jane Quinlan**  
**Presenter: Jason Helfer**  
**4:30–6:00 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Jeremy Rasmussen**

Participants: 22 (superintendents, teachers, union, AdvancED, higher education staff, coordinators, and Illinois Association of School Boards)

**Public Comments**

**Gary Tipsord**, superintendent, LeRoy CUSD 2

Tipsord stated that there is a wide variety of districts in Illinois. And this accountability model, for the first time, will allow districts to tell their own stories about their own successes and that the state board should not lose sight of that. Tipsord's district has developed partnerships with AdvancED to use their resource-based best practices based upon the metrics AdvancED have created. Such partnerships reduce the obligation of the state board of education. The state needs to leverage those capacities so individual districts can create autonomy and flexibility in a way that fits their individual needs. If the state is truly going to meet the needs and aspirations of all students, then there has to be a more concerted effort in imagining what that system would look like. The state board also needs to think about the funding model that would need to be in place. The evidence based funding model that is being advocated alongside the accountability model will need indicators that include resource-based best practice and will need to align funding to meet those evidence-based requirements uniquely and in every district. Everybody will need to understand what the accuracy number looks like, the accuracy number will also need to be based on high quality education for all students that also include merit and equity.

**Erica Hunt**, ISU Center for Education Policy

Hunt stated she was speaking today on behalf of Title II funding, especially around leadership. As far as what do educators' value and how that would be translated into a state plan to improve student achievement, she said utilizing ESSA funding is important. She cited research that stated principal leadership ranks second to teacher effectiveness among school-related factors that impact student performance. The center she works at advocates cost-effective strategies to impact student performance by focusing on school leadership. There is real close alignment between the ESSA Title II regulations and the principal preparation regulations in Illinois, which means Illinois could be a contender for accessing state funding for school leadership without having to pass any new policies. In terms of student growth and the accountability system, Hunt gave some examples of principal preparation programs that have successfully tracked the outcomes of their principals once they leave their programs, and doing so in a way that is using much broader indicators. University of Illinois New Leaders have been tracking the outcomes of their candidates. They are using indicators such as student assessments, student attendance, and teacher attendance in the short term, and culture and climate, freshman on track indicators,

college assessment measures in the long term. She then gave a few observations she made from the P20 council on student assessments, especially on areas she feels are neglected. She said districts have a responsibility for students even before they are in the building through pre-K programs and also afterward, such as in college. One approach would be looking at that transition from early childhood to kindergarten. She said for after high school, there used to be a high school feedback report, which was a really good start to tracking how students were doing in postsecondary education. The ability for a principal to see how many of his/her students went on to an Illinois postsecondary institution is a very important indicator. As far what should be in the state plan to improve coordinated services to schools and districts, in 2014 the state board and the Board of Higher Education jointly convened an Illinois school leader advisory council that came up with a strategic action plan for leadership. It was focused on four main areas: programs, quality assurance, partnerships, and networks. She encourages this as a strategic plan for ESSA and Title II funding. The center she works for focuses on partnerships. She said there is power in bringing together partners throughout the state to do this work.

**Rebecca Wattleworth**, Illinois State Teachers of the Year and Advance Illinois

Wattleworth said she believes the big thing missing is the teacher piece and the teacher voice. If teachers don't have buy-in, it's not going to go anywhere. Being able to have teacher voice on each of the committees. Having teacher on the committee or on the board of education is important because they are speaking for the kids. Partnerships include teachers. Teachers are the number one reason for students to achieve success. Communication is also very important. This needs to be done right because there is going to be no second shot. When Common Core was rolled out, there was a huge lack of communication with teachers. Let's not make the same mistake with ESSA by improving communication on each of the aspects. This could be done by creating advisory council with teacher who can go out and communicates with other teachers. Because a teacher learning from a teacher is way more effective than an administrator. Getting teachers to share their voice with an emphasis on working together is the way this can be implemented with fidelity.

**Tara Tighe**, director of curriculum and assessment

If there are things that are not required federally, then they should not be required as a state. Unless it is something that is a need for local districts. There are already local assessments and responses to interventions (RTIs) in place, and now there is suddenly another assessment that needs to be done. There is little buy-in with these extra assessments. Perhaps it is because teachers often don't understand what the data is going to be used for, which might indicate better communication is needed. As far as accountability systems go, it needs to be a fair system and fit specific needs of different schools. The students that are in K-12 should be identified, because those are truly the students the schools are 100 percent accountable for. Sometimes students transfer to new schools and if those students did not receive the early intervention they needed. It would be interesting to see how students for which the schools are 100 percent responsible perform. In PARCC testing, sometimes there are middle school students who are taking and being tested on high school math 1. When this happens, middle schools are losing their top students, since their scores are not being reported at the junior high level. Thus, if it's going to be reported, it needs to be specified. In terms of the state plan, everything needs to be focused and

concise. Pick a couple of things and do them very well. Roll out supports that are thought through with timelines along the way.

**Dr. Patrick Rice**, field services director, Illinois Association of School Boards

Dr. Rice said the association he works for stands committed to Vision 20/20. One of its tenets is to ensure diversity in the classrooms. He pointed to a recent study that showed the number of teaching candidates is down, especially for minorities in general. If student achievement is going to be addressed, there must be diversity so students have teachers who can relate to their culture and backgrounds. Research has also shown that for student achievement to excel, there needs to be two fundamental pieces in place: (1) good relationships with students and (2) high expectations. Part of the purpose of education is to have a well-rounded liberal arts curriculum. Students should be exposed to as many subjects as possible in order to create exposure that triggers their interests. In the past, there has been a heavy emphasis on reading and math. Because of this, other subjects lag behind. The association he works for supports testing. Yet, his association does not agree that tests should be given just one a time a year. Assessments should cover a wide range of subjects. Assessments and accountability systems should include multiple measures of student achievement determined at the state and local levels. The new accountability system should continue to come from district practice at least 75 percent. There also needs to be collaboration, especially a model of PLCs. Teachers learn best when they work together in a system of collaboration with other teachers and administrators. Need to take a look at linking the teacher evaluation system with teacher and student performance.

**Chris Vowels**, principal, USD 116, Urbana

Vowels stated that one of the best things of ESSA is the flexibility component. For example, the Pre-K for all grant targets her student population and the students with greatest needs. Looking for those supports, those collaborations, and professional development is key to meeting the needs of at-risk students. Getting teachers endorsed in EL education is very important and is good for community partnerships. Using title funds to help with professional development piece needs to be considered. For assessment, it is important for educators to know who is using the data gathered by assessments and what that data is showing. It is more about quality than quantity. Another good thing about ESSA is how it has been trying to gather input from teachers, administrators and community leaders, and early learning advocates.

**Erica Hunt**, ISU Center for Education Policy

Hunt wanted to respond to the speaker who talked about diverse education. She said she believes that is a huge priority for the state and something the governor's P20 council has been working on. The numbers are getting worse. The state is not preparing the kinds of teachers needed to match the diversity of Illinois students. She mentioned a source of funding in the state called the Teacher Certification Revolving Fund that allows the state board of education to take an additional percentage from the licensure exams and use it for diverse educator pipelines.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Vandalia Regional Office of Education 3/April 25, 2016**  
**Host: ROE Superintendent Julie Wollerman**  
**Presenter: Jason Helfer**  
**4:30–6:04 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Rachel Trimble**

Participants: 11 (superintendents, teachers, union, AdvancED, Illinois General Assembly, and Illinois Association of School Boards)

**Formal and Informal Comments**

**Julie Wollerman**, regional superintendent, ROE 3

- There are parents who are opting out of PARCC ... Helfer comments that letters from ISBE that clarify the 95 percent participation rate of PARCC in the previous year have quieted down concerns in the north. Superintendent Wollerman feels that more downstate parents/districts will utilize opt out and have more of a voice than in the previous year.
- When talking about the standards, we tend to throw a lot of money to kids when they are young (i.e., Pre–K). We need to remember all kids at all grades when they struggle (K–12.) When we transition our students, we need to look at career and college.

**Carol Hildebrand**, retired teacher

- ISBE has been listening—Helfer commented and thanked her.

**Teresa Coleman**, National Board–certified teacher, family and consumer sciences, Hillsboro High School

- Recommend including National Board (NB) as part of ESSA plan for the professional development of teachers. As a classroom teacher, my experience with the National Board process has directly impacted the quality of my classroom and enhanced the curriculum offered to my students. The NB process enables teachers to recognize the importance of understanding student needs, setting appropriate learning goals, designing effective instruction and the power of reflection on overall student growth with relationship to revising and setting new goals for students. The end result is an aligned classroom that connects every effort to serving and challenging our students. Please consider the selection of the NB process as an option for the professional development of teachers in Illinois.
- National Board process has made her a better teacher and assisted with alignment of her classroom. National Board is a great opportunity for preservice teacher and novice teachers as they use the national board standards as their guide. National board presents many opportunities for colleagues as it assists with bringing community into your classroom. Hoping that under Title II, the ISBE plan will consider PD from National Board options for teachers.

**Marchelle Kassenbaum**, assistant regional superintendent

- Question on gifted education. Concern for the future of gifted education and wonders what ISBE sees for gifted education. Helfer comments.

**Rep. John Cavaletto**, Illinois General Assembly

- Question about the universal statement on remedial classes for elementary, high schools, and colleges. This is what irritates us, the General Assembly; seems like the same thing is being taught over and over again to students in remedial classes K–16.
- Ninety percent is a good goal, as many of our students' homes do not have good parental support. We have a huge, huge problem of just raising kids up and through school. Teachers are having to serve in a parental role more and more. Seems like we jump around so much in education. I think we make this all so difficult.
- Since I have been in the General Assembly, seems like the Chicago counties are calling the shots, and there are big differences in all parts of the state. We have to teach to what is going on in our districts and we will find kids can excel. I know the governor plans to fully fund education and bring that dollar amount up, and I am thinking how the governor is going to do this and fund schools 100 percent. I am not sure how he will do this, but it needs to be done.
- It is different from my day and how our students don't have both parents and maybe just a mom and how we can help. Ninety percent is a great goal, and I hope you can achieve that, but I think education gets more and more confusing every day. People are made to change every year, and we take away from the teacher when we do that. Your expertise and your feelings, but we are directing you more and more. We want to take student teachers (you know that bill we looked at the other day) in their third year and require all sort of things. We just need to teach.
- Also, we are going more to the principals, too. We are directing too much law. We need to give schools more freedoms. So, I know what you want to try and do, but it's getting so big and getting so hard. I am sure you are hoping for better. I don't know. I think teaching is a great field. We need more and more looking into teaching. How many times were you (Helfer) evaluated when you were a teacher? I think we need to remember the 50 percent in the classroom rule we used to look at. We put so much on the principal, and they are doing so many other things. If we are not inspecting things, we can't improve on it.
- We need to allow students to fail at the highest level. I know tracking was going on at one of my districts. I don't believe all students have the same opportunities. To me, all kids need an opportunity.
- Question: Do you see any legislation coming out of this (ESSA)? Helfer commented.
- Question: Would you comment on the academic assessments. We just voted in the house to give districts a choice: ACT/SAT. (Helfer commented that ISBE did not sponsor either one of those bills.) What would ISBE prefer? One assessment or two? I think we should give schools a choice and I voted for giving schools a choice on one or the other. It is not easy to fit every foot with a shoe. It is not easy. Seems like the north is in control on the educational process. Politics. CPS insists on politics, and it is not about kids.

- There are rumors that the governor is taking over Chicago. You are talking about millions and millions of dollars in an institution. So I don't know what he can do. I think it is needed there.

**Patrick Price**, field director, Illinois Association of School Boards

- Proud [that] ISBE is allowing these listening tours and allowing Illinois to have a footprint in the process and implement this well. We need a lot of the decisions to be at the local level. The IASB wants to reiterate we need multiple assessments, we do believe districts need more accountability in the system.
- The turnaround model needs to be re-looked at. We know that the turnaround models does not work, and we have areas of the country who have used this (model of replacing the principal), and it does not work.
- We need to look more at PLCs and giving districts more time to get together to work on their processes. We need to work on minority problems in education and a workforce that mirrors our students. We need a strong liberal arts curriculum. Make sure students have a strong liberal arts program so we can attract students. Student-to-teacher accountability (teacher evaluation and student growth) model is not working. We need a model that supports our educators.
- Question: What will be the plan for the Priority and Focus schools? How can these districts can get off the list? Redlining a district can impact community and industry and people moving in the community. Helfer commented.
- I hope ISBE will allow districts to have a leadership role than what we have seen with recent legislations. When we reauthorized, we saw too much regulation and this is our chance to get out of the feds oversight. Thank you to ISBE for the tours. The state could play a role in supporting districts.

**Dave Rademacher**, superintendent, Patoka District

- Question: Will my Pre-K program in my district be a part of the slide presentation for Pre-K. Will I still have this program? Helfer is going to check.

**Larry Bussard**, superintendent, Richland County Community Unit School District 1 (sent his public comment)

- We value continuous improvement, educational quality, adequate resources and the autonomy to make decisions at the local level that will best serve the students in our districts.
- Identify a set of research aligned standards and detailed performance levels that have proven effective. Consider adopting AdvancED Standards and performance indicators. These standards are used in 32,000 schools and districts across the United States and in 70 countries worldwide, which impacts more than 20 million students.
- Trust district leadership to support their schools and hold them accountable for improving student outcomes. Consider adopting the AdvancED Performance Accreditation model as

the foundation of the state's continuous improvement and accountability system. (See handout.)

- Include a proven, validated peer review process in the state's accountability plan. AdvancED peer review process has been proven to provide valuable, rich feedback to help schools and districts prioritize improvement efforts. All reviews are led by lead evaluators who have extensive advanced training and are certified.
- Provide resources and support that are user friendly and easily accessible to teachers and administrators. AdvancED has developed a state-of-the-art productivity platform for continuous improvement efforts and planning processes at the local level. (See handout.)
- Consider historical context of Illinois' past efforts. Beginning in the early 1990s, Illinois has developed more than half a dozen improvement planning processes. Several include a peer quality review process. Paper templates evolved to an online tool to support local planning. Even though school and district leaders worked diligently to comply, Illinois did not have the capacity to provide the expertise and ongoing support to maintain any of these systems. Please give thoughtful consideration to adopting a process that is valid, reliable, and used consistently in nearly 1,000 districts and 32,000 schools from around the world. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**North Cook Intermediate Service Center/April 26, 2016**  
**Host: Chair of the ISC Governing Board Dr. Cindy Whittaker**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:30–6:30 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Cora Goldston**

Participants: 71 (school board members, teachers, school psychologists, district administrators, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, staff of Illinois legislators, advocacy group members)

**Matt Raimondi**, coordinator of assessment, District U-46

- Should we submit our comments before July, since ISBE is planning to draft the state plan during the summer?
- Our district is one-fourth English Learners (ELs)
- Right now, the district is using the PARCC, which is a high-rigor test that really assesses mastery. This assesses skills that colleges might want to know. However, the PARCC doesn't include that same depth for growth. Even if students are growing, how do we know that their growth is adequate?
- The 5 Essentials are a great start for family engagement, but there's a lot of language that doesn't apply to all of Illinois (it was originally developed for Chicago). Also the Spanish version of the 5 Essentials doesn't have the same meaning as the English version.
- Illinois needs to look into other measures for poverty besides free/reduced lunch for subgroup measures.
- Flexibility is important, but we don't want measures that are compliance just for the sake of compliance—we want to know that there's a purpose.

**Katie Diggins**, project director, New Teacher Project

- How does the negotiated rulemaking process affect the timeline?

**Julieta Pasko**, school psychologist and member of the Learning Disabilities Association of Illinois

- See written testimony—questions about accountability, ELs, bilingual education, and education for students with learning disabilities.

**Karen Tripp**, retired school psychologist

- See written testimony—discussing services and resources for bilingual and EL education.

**Maralda Davis**, parent and member of Power PAC

- See written testimony—discussing the importance of parent engagement and measuring school climate as an indicator of success.

**Sandra Herrarte**, parent and member of Parent Leaders Uniting Schools (PLUS)

- See written testimony—discussing benefits of community schools.

**Yuridia Dorantes**, parent and member of PLUS

- See written testimony—discussing the benefits of parent and community engagement.

**Marilou Castillo**, parent and member of PLUS

- See written testimony—discussing the importance of parent engagement and parent leadership in education.

**Ann**, parent and member of PLUS

- Grateful that ESSA was passed, as it provides opportunities to students with disabilities.
- Hope students can have more access to speech and occupational therapy.

**Madelyn James**, advocate, Voices for Illinois Children

- It takes many years for students to master social and emotional learning (SEL).
- ESSA provides an opportunity to strengthen the state’s SEL standards. And under ESSA, we have an opportunity to incorporate SEL within early childhood education.
- We must value students at all stages and ages. Also value that students must be healthy to learn. We must ensure that social-emotional wellness and prevention of trauma are top priorities.
- We value a public health approach to social-emotional well-being, including the introduction of mental health professionals in early childhood education.
- We must invest in all children, including home visiting programs, to make sure students are engaged and prepared for life.
- We recognized that the contributions of families and communities should be incorporated, and we applaud ISBE for considering these perspectives.

**Melissa Mitchell**, advocate, Federation for Community Schools

- Talking about 21st Century Community learning centers; Illinois has a very strong program, so it’d be great not to make any monumental shifts.
- Should consider smaller schools and districts in 21st Century Learning as well.
- Want to give students the social-emotional skills that they would need to succeed, and measure school climate/culture should be used to assess accountability, maybe with a sub-measure focused on family and community engagement.
- How do we use ESSA to build a comprehensive plan that values family and community engagement, incorporates a whole child view, and build schools that are really connected to communities and families?
- We hope that ISBE takes this opportunity to use this as a lever for alignment of services across divisions.

**Aaron Golding**, director, Columbia College Media Outreach Partnerships with Community Schools

- Community schools allow parents and educators to come together to talk about issues.
- 21st Century Community Centers are a great resource that promotes nonacademic development.
- Community Schools allow access to high-quality arts education, which can build skills like problem solving, creative thinking, and resourcefulness.
- Hope that community schools will continue to be an integral part of Illinois’s state plan

**Eddie Anguiane**, director, Metropolitan Family Services

- Over my career, I’ve learned that young people are the keystone to our society. Young people are gifts, waiting to be discovered. As adults, our job must be to help students realize the talents they possess and engage with those talents.
- At Metropolitan Family Services, we’ve found that community schools are the best method for supporting the development of students’ talents. For example, we find that cooking classes help students better understand their math and science classes, and restorative justice classes help students find better ways to resolve conflict.
- Classes open to the community help parents find better ways to cope with stress and show love and support to their students.
- Eighty-nine percent of students reported that coming to the afterschool program helped them achieve more.
- One student’s grades began to drop after her father passed away, but her grades and outlook on life improved after she joined our afterschool program. Two students with Down syndrome have met other students and made new friends through our program; now feeling like part of the community.
- The state should ensure that high-quality school definition includes positive climate, social and emotional learning supports, and family engagement.
- Include flexibility around Title I and Title IV funding.

**Phil Pritzker**, president, Illinois Association of School Boards, and school board member, District 21

- As the president of the Illinois Association of School Boards, I represent over 6,000 school board members throughout the state.
- In District 21, our tagline is “preparing all students for success.” Our district is so diverse that it wouldn’t be considered at the top of “academic rigor” by state measure. However, 2 of our 13 sites have received distinctions from the U.S. Department of Education because of our dedication to the whole child.
- In terms of the accountability model, we recognize the need for accountability models, but everyone is involved in accountability—students, teachers, board members, parents, etc.

- We believe in the growth model—not just looking at a single test, but looking at growth from the beginning of the year for the end, and the new Illinois plan should take that into consideration.
- Students don't all come to the table at the same time, so having a test at a single time of year doesn't make sense.

**Martha Stark**, director, NSERVE

- NSERVE is a career and technical education (CTE) consortium of nine high schools in the north suburbs.
- We have longitudinal data saying that students are taking more time of core subjects, but assessment performance remains flat. When core subjects are paired with CTE, students do much better. We want to work with ISBE to incorporate CTE within core subject instruction.

**Patti Fleser**, middle school librarian, District 67, and president-elect, Illinois School Media Association

- School librarians are glad to be included, along with other school support personnel, under ESSA. Powerful libraries make powerful schools.

**Joyce Weiner**, policy associate, Ounce of Prevention

- The years from birth to age 5 present the greatest opportunity for learning, SEL, behavioral health, and mental health.
- Since ESSA has the opportunity to include early learning, we recommend that funds be used to improve linkages between early childhood and elementary education. Investing title funds in those early years can provide a proactive step up for the years of testing.

**Josie Yangquan**, chair, Illinois Advisory Council for Bilingual Education

- Be mindful of diverse language learners.
- The state has passed a state Seal of Biliteracy, which allows high school students to graduate with a seal that indicates that they speak English along with another languages. We want to encourage multilingualism in all schools.
- To ensure validity and reliability for testing for ELs, we're requesting that funding be allocated for Title I funding for development of Spanish literacy and Spanish science assessments.
- Title III stipulates that students moving out of EL services be accounted with the EL subgroup for 4 years after exiting services. However, achievement gains are likely to happen after that 4-year window.
- How will the state handle opt-outs for state testing, especially since assessments are used for teacher and principal evaluation?

**Dan Swartz**, director, teaching and learning, Mundelein District 75

- There's a feeling that Illinois continues to "build the plane while flying it." PARCC wasn't ready when the districts were ready for it; the science assessment isn't ready. Ultimately, it's the teachers that look bad because of it.
- Asking the state to consider assessment and roll it out in a way that will make implementation successful. Make sure assessment is finished and deliberate.

**Nancy Wagner**, superintendent, Beech Park School District #3

- I implore the state board to give us flexibility in accountability for districts. Under rigid measures, small districts won't be able to meet fidelity measures.

**Lannon Broughton**, member, Power PAC

- Think about how we will account for diverse learners, and what impact the new ESSA regulations have for diverse learners.
- Parent engagement is crucial. Some of the community engagement funding should be allotted directly for parent engagement. There should be parents on the ISBE board; currently there are no parent representatives.
- Someone talked about a separate test for Spanish speakers. In Chicago, different neighborhoods have different languages that are prevalent, so the state should consider a broader range of tests available. Also, what works in Chicago won't necessarily work for rural areas.
- Make sure that ISBE isn't putting the public below other stakeholders—the public is the most important stakeholder.

**Ben Collins**, assistant principal for teaching and learning, Maine Township District 207

- Is there a process in the state plan that would help keep schools accountable, but not rest the teachers' outcomes entirely on student performance?

**Bill Farmer**, high school biology teacher, Evanston Township District 202

- There's a misalignment of efforts between assessment and instruction. We want to ensure that we aren't spinning our wheels.

**Darcy Nendza**, director, Illinois Music Education Association, and school board member, District 146

- How can we make Illinois the most attractive state for teacher candidates?

**Sarah Slavin**, executive director, New Teacher Center

- Have an entry point around an evidence base for state plan decisions.

**Gloria Harris**, member, Power PAC

- Will the state be able to revise the plan, if stakeholders think that changes are necessary after the initial state plan is drafted?

**Chris**, teacher, Chicago Public Schools

- Interested in meaningful, sustained, and relevant professional development opportunities.
- Hope ISBE uses this opportunity to support professional learning communities and development opportunities.

**Ryan Crosby**, director of performance data and policy, Chicago Public Schools

- The opportunity the ESSA provides to develop a new accountability system is great. It takes what was a one-dimensional accountability system and makes it 2-D, but it'd still not quite at a totally 3-D level yet. I encourage ISBE to develop an accountability system that mirrors the well-rounded students and issues we have.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Menard/Sangamon Regional Office of Education 51/April 27, 2016**  
**Host: ROE Superintendent Dr. Jeff Vose**  
**Presenter: Jason Helfer**  
**4:30–5:40 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Cora Goldston**

Participants: 42 (Illinois Center on School Improvement staff, members of the Illinois Association of School Boards, teachers, principals, Illinois State Board of Education staff, superintendents, district administrators, policy advocates)

**Michael Kelly**, superintendent, Carlinville CCSD 1

- Asking the state to include something like AdvancED when developing the improvement process

**Tom Neely**, school board member, District 709, and representative for the Central Illinois Valley Division of the Illinois Association of School Boards

- U.S. News & World Report recognized Morton’s high school with a silver award of distinction. Much of this success comes from family and community engagement. Our mission is to serve the community by stoking “a desire for lifelong learning” and preparing students to be “leaders in a global dynamic society.” The family is the foundation of this learning.
- The district has about 2,900 students and 1,000 in its high school. Only 7 percent of the district’s funding comes from the state of Illinois. We have average ACT scores of 23.3 versus the state average of 20.7.
- Assessment needs to be more than one test or a series of test given through one year. Assessments should cover a variety of subjects and must be useful. An accountability system should include multiple measures of students’ achievement. The PARCC test doesn’t “fit the bill” of assessing student learning.
- What do we value in a plan? We need adequate funding that puts “less of a burden on our local taxpayers.”
- We need tests that can be useful for feedback—the tests that come from the state are often burdensome and are not meaningful.
- What should be excluded in a new plan? Anything that would be unfunded should be excluded—our district received very little from the state. State testing that doesn’t provided valuable feedback and means taking much time also should be excluded.

**Susan Rhodes**, retired principal and member, Illinois Association of Gifted Schools

- Wondering how we can meet the needs of gifted students in Illinois.
- Illinois is one of seven states that has no funding for gifted students. There hasn’t been accountability for students at the top—we aren’t measuring if they’re learning “all day, every day,” so long as they meet the minimum benchmarks.

- We want to ensure every child succeeds and grows. There are students that are taking Algebra II, but are only taking eighth-grade math assessments—the assessments don't match the curriculum. Just because students are at a high-ability at one grade level, that doesn't mean "we're fine." But if they don't have the supports to grow, then their progress stays stagnant.
- Also concerned about underrepresented students. In my school, students were exited from the program because they didn't have the supports at home to succeed.
- People look at gifted education as something for the "elite." But when you think about gifted children in rural areas, they can't always get into the University of Illinois because they haven't had the exposure to AP classes to get in.
- Title II funding should support teacher development for gifted teachers—when you have a teacher that's gone through inquiry-based learning in professional development, every student benefits from that.
- Often, when students misbehave, it's because they aren't being challenged.
- I would encourage accountability measures to include the needs of gifted students.
- We need to make sure that professional development is addressing needs of high-ability students.
- Right now, you can't even search to see where gifted schools are in the state of Illinois.

**Lisa Weitzel**, board member, Ball-Chatham School District

- Accountability needs to be measurable to help students and teachers grow, not just for our district, but for all districts throughout the state.

**Jessica Handy**, advocate, Stanford Children

- At these hearings, people have been very interested in flexibility. We have a lot of responsibility now that we have more flexibility.
- NCLB did something right in measuring achievement gaps. We need to make sure in our new state plan that we're closing those achievement gaps.
- Measuring whether kids are at a certain level of proficiency doesn't tell us enough information—we need to measure their growth as well. In high school, it's hard to get a growth model because those students only have to be tested once, and K–2 students aren't tested at all, so we have to include accountability measures for those students.
- We need to be mindful of PARCC opt out.
- We need to fix our "worst-in-the-country funding formula."
- Many people in this room are working on ending the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) funding issue—right now, TRS takes 36 percent of Title I funding, which should be going to students.
- We're moving from the "highly qualified" teacher language and moving toward language saying that underrepresented children can't be "disproportionally taught by inexperienced and ineffective teachers"—what does that mean?

**Rebecca Wattleworth**, Teacher, Warrensburg-Latham High School, and member, Illinois State Teacher of the Year

- One of the cheapest ways to address the Title II issue is to tap into the teachers. Teachers are the ones in the classroom who see and hear what students are facing. Administrators can be removed from the situation because they aren't in the classroom. You can combine funding from teachers who are working together—if we can start there, people won't be reinventing the wheel.
- Often schools are in silos, and they aren't communicating with other organizations in the community (i.e., businesses, nonprofits). You may not have the funding to hire an art teacher, but there might be someone in the community who wants to volunteer or help out.
- It could be a long time before there's new legislation, so we need to do this right. And we need to include the perspective of teachers from all around the state. Whether we like the standards, regulations, or funding or not, it's here—the only way to make it work is to bring everyone to the table

**John Aspin**, superintendent, Farmington School District

- PARCC opt-out is a good idea. There should be some national exam, but the amount of time that we spent testing our kids is too much.
- We use MAP—MAP data is helpful to us, but PARCC data takes forever and it isn't helpful.
- Concerned that there's no mentions of opportunities for reducing learning loss over the summer. The achievement gap widens over the summer, because of the difference in access to out-of-school opportunities.

**Jennifer Gill**, superintendent, Springfield Public Schools

- Curious about KIDS assessment and alignment to what's expected from Common Core, along with teacher expectations—there seems to be a disconnect.
- Also thinking about technology—it seems that there isn't enough funding for the devices that we're expected to have, especially since new devices are needed every 3–4 years as new technology develops.
- Also need to think about transportation costs.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Macomb Regional Office of Education 26/April 27, 2016**  
**Host: John Meixner, Regional Superintendent**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:30–6:30 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Jeremy Rasmussen**

Participants: 27 (school board members, teachers, school psychologists, district administrators, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, staff of Illinois legislators, advocacy group members)

**Public Comment**

**Trevor Cottle**, language acquisition director, Beardstown CUSD 15, and member, Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education

- Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education has three preliminary recommendations for ESSA:
  - Under Title I of ESSA, schools are to be held accountable for student English language development and standardized tests of academic content knowledge. To ensure validity and reliability of content assessments for the largest language group served in the state’s TBE/TPI program, a portion of the Title I funds must be used to create Spanish-language literacy and science assessments aligned to college and career readiness standards. Illinois could join a consortium of other states, like Colorado, New Mexico, New York, and New Jersey, to pool funds together.
  - Illinois demographics illustrate that at some point every educator will be responsible for educating an English Learner. Teacher preparation, skills, and qualifications, however, have not kept pace with this change. This is especially alarming given the higher academic language and literacy demands all learners are expected to meet, as stipulated by college and career readiness standards, and the implementation of the state’s accountability system. The council requests Title II set aside funding so all teachers and administrators are involved in professional learning regarding the effective teaching of linguistically and culturally diverse students, including English Learners.
  - Title II within ESSA stipulates that formerly reclassified English Learners are to be included in the EL subgroup for reporting and accountability purposes for a period of up to four years after being reclassified. Illinois stakeholders recommend tracking reclassified ELs through high school. Longitudinal data would serve as a vital indicator of a school district’s effectiveness in minimizing achievement gaps for ELs—achievement gains that are likely to occur after the four-year tracking stipulation. Such an approach is bolstered by research that states that it takes ELs from 5 to 7 years to be on par with their English-speaking colleagues. Finally, accountability and data decision making on ELs within ESSA must be done in consultation with the Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education to ensure the collection of fair, valid, and reliable information.

**Ralph Grimm**, superintendent, Galesburg 205

- The Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure (IBAM) was written by superintendents who are current practitioners in the field. The committee that worked on this model represented the diversity that is Illinois—they represented small, medium, and large districts.
- Two components of the model were well thought out and designed carefully to address ISBE and federal needs around accountability. And the need for practitioners to have a model that reflects the good things happening in public school districts across the state of Illinois. NCLB did not give that option. School and districts were judged solely on the basis of a test score.
- IBAM takes the exact opposite approach. The model reflects the genuine belief that the improvement of school and districts must be continuous and decisions on what to improve is best left up to school districts, local boards of education, administrative teams, teacher group, etc.
- There is a 30/70 split between student assessments and school district improvement efforts, the compliance piece, and contextual piece was deliberate.
- The standards referenced in the model's second component represent months of research of best practices throughout other states. The standards are fewer in number than what is currently called for in Rising Star, but much more comprehensive in terms of emphasizing continuous improvement. The standards emphasize both the teaching and the learning component of the improvement process.
- The standards being recommended in the model have been vetted and agreed to by the IEA and ISBE. This model has been presented to and discussed by various stakeholder groups around the state. Feedback has been very positive.
- ESSA legislation allows for a 49/51 split. The state board should do all that it can to maintain that split. The local district needs flexibility in identifying what should be required assessments. This model represents 2 years of work.
- IBAM standards are consistent with AdvancED, but the problem with AdvancED is its cost. His district looked into partnerships with AdvancED, but the numbers were considerably higher than they could afford. AdvancED is great product and a great system, school and districts that can afford it should look into it. But not every district is going to be able to afford it.
- IBAM is not an arbitrary cut score. And it allows communities to decide what is important to determine success.

**Ardelle Thompson**, Macomb Board of Education

- Wanted to address the assessment process. Concerned that there are too many assessments. Said the state is at a moment where they have no benchmarks and that parents can't see what their children are actually doing.
- Believes in enrichment, but such enrichment opportunities for students are being overlooked for assessments. In other words, there is very little time for teachers to

prepare in order to do their job effectively because they are too busy having to prepare for assessments.

- Students learning should be expanded beyond the subject matter found in assessments. Hopes that the state of Illinois considers these thought as they set up ESSA.
- We have to understand that schools are all over the place with different types of students. How can you write the type of things you have to write when you have to address all of the needs of all of the schools in the state? Has to be written in a way that can help all schools, districts, and students.

**Eric Baum**, principal, Pontiac High School

- When thinking about balanced accountability as principal in a district that is not unified, can't help but think about local control and trying to get up to speed on IBAM and Vision 2020, and all the other things out there.
- Went through the AdvancED accreditation process, which gave him the opportunity to see what he needed to be doing to improve his school.
- The federal government and state government will always be doing what they want to do. Schools need to focus on what they can control locally.
- Recommends the AdvancED accreditation process. Outside team comes in and identifies areas that the school needs to work on. AdvancED are professionals, educators, people in field. He said he has been through Rising Star and got nothing out of it, but AdvancED is different, he gets something out of it.
- Rising Star process was too time consuming and cumbersome and provided no direction. He said AdvancED gave them direction.
- When looking at the continuous improvement model, wonders how the state came up with 90 percent—it's another target they will never hit.

**Jim Leprog**

- There is concern from stakeholders on how narrowly student achievement is defined. That was a problem with NCLB. Doesn't think they are changing that with this percentage. Pushing that number to that 30/70 split allows for that.
- What is one thing that correlates with student achievement? Socioeconomic status (SES) of the students. Getting way too caught up in accountability.
- Likes what he is hearing about flexibility, but should be more focused on increasing opportunities for low SES students.
- What does a failing list do for schools continuously on it? Nothing. These assessments created that are not localized, what have they done?
- Concerned with the 95 percent assessment participation rate. How is that going to work with parental choice? How can state penalize districts because of parents' choice?

**Patrick Twomey**, superintendent, Macomb Community Unit School District 185

- Stated that is easy to always push blame on Congress. Thirty percent of Teachers Retirement System (TRS) has to be spent on Title kids. The state chooses to charge this 30 percent. He wonders if there has been any conversation around that.
- Competitive grants don't work. Rural districts can't compete with districts that hire professional grant writers.

**Sue McCance**, member, Illinois Association of School Boards

- In rural school districts, there is an expectation in every district to teach the same way. Teachers are responsible for meeting 90 percent of the goal requirements in testing, but not meeting what the state expects us to do. Want to be able to educate our students to the best of that student's ability.
- Best thing to do is to compare students to themselves.
- How do we fund preschool? Have to compete for with other districts for grant money.
- Teachers are scarce, can't pay them enough to stay. Have been using Illinois Virtual School to get qualified teachers and to provide students with the classes they need.
- Need federal funds for virtual school and dual-credit opportunities, but federal funds are not being funneled that way. Reaching for 90 percent, which won't happen overnight.

**Carrie Finch**, preschool teacher

- Believes the state should take a lesson from preschool. Her school program was evaluated and was awarded gold. She said she is sending 100 percent of her students happy and loving into kindergarten. Each student is evaluated at their own level.
- Accountability and all these tests are making students and teachers unhappy. Need to create success through something you love. Who will graduate? Students who want to be there. Who will be distinguished teachers? Those who want to be there. Feel like we can't do that anymore.

**Scott Vogler**, board member, West Prairie School District 103

- We are all looking for consistent standards and testing to provide usable data while not holding ourselves hostage to the test.
- Local elected SB members and admin are in best place to make decisions. All decisions should be based on one simple question—is it good for the kids?

**Todd Fox**, Superintendent, Southeastern District 337

- The biggest challenge is to keep things as simple as possible. Trying too hard. Trying to please too many people. Trying to show our worth. If things are kept simple, can focus on kids.
- Research says a lot of things—research still says put a quality teacher in front of kids and give them resources to do what they do, and watch them go. If we get too far away from that, too complex. Schools that dragged feet on NCLB are ahead of those that went for it.

**Reatha Owen**, member, Illinois Association of School Boards

- How do boards monitor performance?
- How should the board communicate with stakeholders to get their support?
- When it comes to monitoring piece, it's hard when there is no target to hit. Goes back to how to tell the story of how we are doing. This part has to change.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**Regional Office of Education 21/May 17, 2016**  
**Host: ROE Superintendent Matt Donkin**  
**Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:30–5:40 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Cora Goldston**

Participants: 21 (superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, principals, assistant principals, teachers, school board members, reporters)

**B.J. Richardson**, principal, Sandwich CUSB 40

- Being a principal, I've seen these initiatives come and go.
- About 12 years ago, our district realized we needed to take a systemic approach to school improvement. We began using NCA, and NCA merged with other groups to become AdvancED.
- We chose NCA/AdvancED because it gave us rubrics and a systemic, research-based evidence to support our school improvement efforts.
- We were doing it as individual; buildings, but moved to a districtwide systems under AdvancED—this allows us to develop a coordinated school improvement plan.
- I wouldn't want to see all of our hard work thrown out for another initiative that won't allow us to use the supports we have. We can measure our growth and achievement under the current system.

**Charley Cass**, principal, Frankfurt District 168

- How much of what we can do is more local? What's considered "success" in one part of the state isn't necessarily the same in other parts of the state, because they have different kids and different situations.
- The districts should have freedom to decide what's valuable in terms of student achievement.
- If the state wants to determine cut points for assessment, they can, but there should be local control over what's measured for student achievement.

**Dr. Patrick Rice**, representative, Illinois Association of School Boards

- Thanking ISBE for the opportunity to gather feedback through these listening tours, as we implement ESSA and a new accountability system.
- Sometimes, people forget that our founding fathers were the first to discuss the importance of local education. With changing leaders at the federal level, they thought there would be too much chaos with federal oversight. ESSA was intended to reduce some of that federal footprint.

- IASB agrees with the importance of assessment. Assessments should be more than one test or a series of tests given through the year—they must be multiple assessment.
- New accountability systems should come from district practice, with includes compliance, intentional practices, and best practices.
- Some of the school turnaround measures included turning public schools into charter schools—we should be careful of any school turnaround systems that haven't produced results as of yet.
- When we're talking about the schools on the targeted and improvement lists—be mindful of how schools are put on that list. We don't want it to become a redlining type of system.
- To boost student achievement, we need a diverse workforce. We have a shortage of diverse teachers. We need teachers that represent their students, both racial and socioeconomic. One of the most important pieces of student achievement is building a relationship with students. We can't build those relationships without a diverse teacher group.
- We have to make sure we're treating our teachers, principals and superintendents as the professionals that they are. I strongly believe in PLCs.
- We've tried merit pay, which only fostered competition. We tried the turnaround models, for example, one model involved firing the principal and a lot of staff, and that didn't work. We looked at Kentucky, which has a turnaround model that involved firing the principal, and there were no significant improvements. However, if we invest in PLCs and support the research and communication they want, there can be a lot of success.
- What's the purpose of education? I believe the purpose is to link students with their purpose in life, and that could only be done if students are exposed to a wide range of classes. I grew up in East St. Louis, and they have the number one jazz band in the country. We've spent so much time focusing on tested areas like ELA and math, that other subjects like music or CTE have been forgotten. When we're doing growth measures, we need to measure growth in all areas—students need a well-rounded curriculum.
- I'd like to see grants targeted for mentoring programs—I'm a huge supporter of mentoring programs. We have a shortage of teachers—we definitely need to have mentors in the classroom, not only for students, but for teachers and family members as well. There are plenty of people who are interested in mentoring, we just have to bring them in.
- We support testing in grades 3–8 and in high school, but we want to have multiple assessments.

**Melinda Fiscus**, director, Illinois Learning Technology Center 6

- A little concerned that technology funding isn't more expressly included in Title IV.
- On call with SETA, people were asking if they could use Title IV funds to pay for technology—I cringed because we should be using E-rates and other funding

opportunities to support our tech initiatives, like bringing fiber optic connectivity to schools around the state.

- The last technology program was passed in 2007, and it was just a rubber stamp on the 2004 rules. We need to consider what good technology integration looks like and make sure it's included with other components of the plan
- In the current model, we're told that 21st Century funding under the afterschool umbrella can only be used for materials in afterschool programs, not during the day.
- When it comes down to looking at the different ways to use funding, many schools come up with great ideas, but are told by ISBE that the costs aren't allowable
- So many times, we've seen fantastic things happen with federal grants, like EETA. But when the federal funding ended, often the programs did too. We can use these programs as best practices and show other districts what they can do as well.
- The school districts that I consider most successful can say, "This is where we are and this is where we want to be—how can we leverage our funding to reach our goals?" ISBE should provide guidance to help other districts break down silos between programs.

**Joshua Stafford**, staff member, Vienna Grade School District 55

- We have locally elected school boards. Most people in education professions have at least attended a four-year college, if not receiving a masters or doctorate. The local professionals know their schools and their students. We need to shift back to local control to make sure districts can best support their kids. We need to get away from the government bureaucracy that's set in.
- Growth measures comes back to local context. What happens when students graduate from school? Are there local jobs to accommodate students? Are we waiting for students to be ready to get local jobs, or do we want them to achieve a certain number of college credits.

**Ron Daniels**, regional superintendent, ROE 13 (Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties)

- As a former principal and superintendent of high schools, I'm glad to see other ways of demonstrating that high school students are making a difference. Not all students are 4-year college-bound, but we can show they they've made strides in other kinds of classes, like welding programs.
- When you aren't evaluating the same kids year after year, you can't really determine how much growth is taking place.
- Some of the grants are so controlled, that you can't share resources within programs in the school. Too many times, I've heard about waste, and people end up spending money on things they don't need to buy. Allowing people to share resources across grants would be much better. I've seen too much money wasted in grant cycles.

**Susie Morrison**, former deputy superintendent, Illinois State Board of Education

- High-level/overview thoughts—state education professionals have been doing accountability and school improvement for over three decades now, and we've learned a lot. Allow us to use our experience and research base to inform our practices.
- Let's use this opportunity to create a single statewide accountability plan. The plan should ensure districts measure accountability for every students, while trusting districts with the autonomy and flexibility to measure accountability.
- Appreciate ISBE taking the time to take this information.
- There are still a lot of unknowns about the ESSA plan rollout.
- Hope that when the Illinois state plan is written, we include the elements that are required under the federal law, but not a lot of extraneous information. Make the plan as simple and succinct as possible, and roll out something that's in the best interest of students.

**Illinois ESSA Listening Tour**  
**National Louis University/May 19, 2016**  
**Host and Presenter: Melina Wright**  
**4:30–6:30 p.m.**  
**Note Taker: Jeremy Rasmussen**

Participants: 46 (principals, policy advocates, teachers, parents, union members)

**Joy Clendenning**, RYH action board member

- Any accountability system must take into account resources and needs of particular school and community. The state needs to be held accountable for providing the resources that local communities cannot. Hoping the reauthorization will be used to do a better job from what they have seen.

**Stephanie Polacheck**, clinical supervisor

- Research has shown that youth in foster care face a number of challenges in realm of education, such as achievement gaps, dropout rates, discipline, etc. These kids have opportunities to thrive, but they need extra support which means they need clarification in terms of ESSA (i.e. clarification regarding transportation).
- Recommends the state offer professional development programs that focus on trauma inform care.
- Offered another recommendation that students from foster homes be able to enroll in school immediately following move.
- Mentioned that improved communication among stakeholders is needed.

**Okab T. Hassan**, principal

- The state needs to support funding for community schools that impact of parents, homes, and communities.
- English Learners comprise half of my school's population.
- There has been a decrease in funding from the state, whether it be Title I or Title II.
- Resources need to be distributed for community schools and funding for bilingual students.
- Need to achieve equity, resources need be available for low-income and EL students. Can't support by talk; needs action. The more parents are educated, the better education their children will have. Need support, find ways to provide community schools with resources.

**Simeon Stumme and Judy Sauri**, presidents, Illinois Association of Multilingual Multicultural Education

- Stumme said he was in support of the recommendation of bilingual education. Under Title I, there is support for creation of Spanish-language assessments in language arts and science. Some states already do this. State should set aside funds to train teachers to

address the needs of students culturally and linguistically. Would be great if states could reclassify ELs for four years so there will be longitudinal data that can gauge how ELs do over the span of their education.

- Sauri said the state needs educators that understand how to teach native languages. Title II funding could be used for this.

### **Emily Carroll, Healthy School Campaigns**

- Healthy students are better learners. Thrilled to see ESSA recognize this link. ESSA presents huge opportunity to promote connections between health and learning.
- Unlike NCLB, ESSA empathizes health and mental well-being. Title I, II, and IV create funds for schools to implement health programs and professional development that focuses on behavioral and mental health and school plans for healthier school environments.
- Strongly encourages to create a state plan that prioritizes health and wellness.
- Recommendation 1: ESSA states that the accountability system must include one nonacademic indicator, which could be a school environment indicator. The indicator should not increase burden of testing.
- Recommendation 2: ISBE needs assessments based on individual school needs that includes room for schoolwide health programs.
- Recommendation 3: The state required report card should include measures of health and wellness.

### **Jennifer Stadelmann, parent**

- My industry is struggling to recruit qualified talented workers.
- Many of today's jobs will eventually be replaced by machines.
- Current system emphasizes a narrow set of skills through standardized testing; they test the same skills that can be replaced by machines. Need assessments that include soft skills (i.e., leadership, creativity, collaboration, grit).
- Some students take up to 31 standardized tests by the end of the year. Classrooms are too focused and spending too much time teaching to the test; that time could be better used teaching 21st century skills needed for 21st century careers.
- The current accountability system is flawed. Data means nothing if it is not interpreted correctly. The data collected needs to be normalized.
- School testing scores present incomplete picture. Children have good days, bad days, some have a high level of anxiety. Individual children are not robots. Time devoted to tests means time away from project-based learning that could help shape critical thinking.

**Heather Debby**, middle school teacher

- Teachers need to be involved when it comes to implementation of ESSA. The state needs to reach out to teachers so they know what is happening.
- Chicago Public Schools has a teacher advisory panel, which is something Illinois should have statewide.
- Illinois is a diverse state. Make sure we include that diverse input in ESSA implementation.

**Cassie Creswell**, More Than a Score

- Everyone is sick to death of standardized testing. About 45,000 students did not take part in testing last year. State barely made 95 percent requirement.
- Need to create an accountability system that curbs testing. Standardized tests do nothing but measure someone's socioeconomic status (i.e., PARRC). Current testing does not test thoughtfulness or creativity.
- Recommendation 1: must develop high-quality assessments that go beyond standardized tests—Illinois needs authentic assessment process.
- Recommendation 2: must create truly balanced accountability system, not bare minimum—accountability system needs qualitative and observation data need to play a role; numbers can't capture everything.

**Caroline Bilicki**, parent

- Testified against the emphasis on testing and accountability.
- As a parent, refuses to believe standardized testing reveals anything useful about a child a student. Current accountability system is too focused on outcomes. They forget the purpose of public education.
- Authenticated assessment is important, must be a priority, and adds depth and nuance. Standardized tests do not add value, they subtract.
- Encouraged Illinois to take steps to be included in the innovation assessment pilot to explore authentic assessments.

**Nick Schmidt**, science teacher

- Any accountability system should include multiple measures and view schools as a dynamic system.
- Sense of safety is a big deal. Hard to learn when students don't feel safe.
- Push for measuring social-emotional and health and climate indicators. The 5 Essentials survey is invaluable and points to clues to what students are feeling as well as teachers and parents. Like to see that continued or expanded.

**Bridget Bennen**, special needs teacher

- Current accountability systems can be used in punitive way (i.e., school closings). School closings affect children greatly; need to make it known how harmful it is when a school closes. When students do not feel safe or comforted, it is difficult for them to learn. Going forward, there should be accountability systems that highlight what schools need and how they can improve instead of closing them.

**Jennifer Johnson**, Chicago Teachers Union

- Would like to see standardized tests decoupled from teacher evaluations.
- Focus on diagnostic tools for teacher to identify weaknesses in a teacher context.
- Collaborative professional opportunities are needed.

**Karen Garibay Mulattieri**, Latino Policy Forum

- English Learners are a fascinating group full of potential, but there needs to be opportunities for them to perform at that potential. Need to view bilingual students as an asset.
- New accountability system should look at ways to contribute to workforce of the future that includes bilingual children.

**Sandra Garnica**, Communities in Schools of Chicago

- My organization helps assess the whole school and student needs and connect them to programs. ESSA highlights integrated supports as effective and encourages use as intervention. Ask that ISBE provide clear guidance on when/how to do this.

**Todd Price**, director of policy studies

- Interested in how higher education fits into this picture. It seems that educator preparedness is not a focus of Congress, though ESSA tackles it more directly.
- Wondering how social sciences will come into play under ESSA.

**Elizabeth Levy**, Arts Education Theatre Company

- Encouraged about well-rounded education in terms of evaluation as art partners.
- Time to provide program depends on schools' ability to have time, resources. Scheduling has been hard because of testing. With so much testing, not enough time to provide other programs.